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RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0178
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0997
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RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0163
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0904
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0276
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA PRIORITY 0665
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0254

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SUBJECT: BAHRAIN TO CRITICIZE LACK OF G8 SUPPORT FOR
ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER AT SANAA FORUM FOR THE FUTURE PREP
MEETING

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11. (SBU) MFA Director for Bilateral Affairs Dr. Dhafer Al Umran, who will represent Bahrain at the Sanaa Forum for the Future preparatory meeting during the week of June 3, told Pol/Econ Chief May 30 that he plans to criticize G8 countries, with the exception of the U.S. and UK, for their lack of support for the Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence in Bahrain (CEEB). He emphasized that Bahrain had agreed to host the CEEB at the request of G8 countries at the Sea Island Summit in 2004 and the first Forum for the Future meeting later that year in Morocco. Unfortunately, the only G8 countries to step in with support were the U.S. and UK. (The GOB gives in-kind assistance by providing office space, administrative support, and linkages with other entrepreneurship-based programs in Bahrain.) As a result of the lack of funding, the Center plans to halt its operations at the end of June.

12. (SBU) Al Umran said he has prodded G8 representatives to support the CEEB on many occasions, including international meetings in Sharm Al Sheikh, Singapore, Jordan, and Moscow over the past twelve months, but always comes up empty. At the Sanaa session, he will say that Bahrain is inclined to oppose any proposed new BMENA initiatives because the G8 is unable to support those already under way. Without support for concrete programs like the CEEB, the Forum process becomes "just a lot of hot air," he said. He noted that the MFA, and he in particular, have come under attack locally for the CEEB's planned closure. The situation has "provided ammunition" to those who oppose G8-BMENA relations, and the closure represents a blow to political relations between the G8 and the countries of the region.

13. (SBU) Al Umran asked that the USG representative to the Sanaa meeting voice support for G8 funding for the CEEB, following his intervention. He said he would make a similar request of the British government.

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